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EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

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THE bitterness of party spirit is never to be excused or defended, much less commended; yet the existence of parties seems unavoidable in the conditions of our people, and should not be regarded as necessarily an evil. They promote watchfulness on the part of the people, and render it next to impossible for those in power to betray their trust or to cherish abuses that imperil the nation. From the beginning of our history there have been parties, and it may be something of an encouragement to know that, with the expansion of the public domain, the increase of population, the development of resources, and the progress of learning, wealth, and social power among the people, there has not been such an increase of political rancor in our party strifes as many imagine, and which superficial observers regard as the bane of our times, and as the prophecy of disaster to our franchises and liberties.

The political parties of the colonial period were transplants from the mother-country, with issues allied to those which represented the divisions of public sentiment on the other side of the ocean. The Tory was the loyalist party in England, which supported the prerogatives of the crown, and defended its exactions and tyrannies, often to the hazard of the liberties and prosperity of the people. Of course, this party took sides with the king in all those measures and controversies which agitated the public mind in the colonies prior to the outbreak of the war for independence, and supported him in his struggle to subdue his rebellious subjects to obedience. Tories in England and America were one in sympathy and purpose, loyalists in the highest sense. The liberalists of that day, both in England and in the colonies,

were known as Whigs. They stood for the rights of the people, under constitutional government, against the aggressions of the crown. In the estimation of the Tory, the people exist for the government ; but in the estimation of the Whig, the government exists for the people. This difference characterizes the issues between the Conservatives and Liberalists of England till this day, and its manifestations are easily traceable through all their partisan contests for ascendancy in the government.

During the period of the Revolution, the words Tory and Whig fitly expressed the sentiments of the parties in their relation to the mighty struggle ; but, after independence, the word "Tory" became too obnoxious to loyal Americans ever to be used in this country as the name of a political party. The word "Whig" never incurred odium of any sort, but it lost much of its significance in the new conditions which followed the war, particularly under the Articles of Confederation. While as yet there was no national constitution to be interpreted, and no central government strong enough to excite the jealousy of States or sections, the old party names and disputations disappeared, and public men patriotically devoted themselves to the rudiments of government, to the study of fundamental principles and their application to the urgent needs of the times, to the consideration of questions of finance, foreign relations, domestic order, and to the adjustment of the relations between the States and the nation.

The result of their ponderings appeared in the Federal Constitution, which displaced the Confederacy, formed "a more perfect union," and cemented the elements of republicanism into a compact nationality ; and all this without disturbing the autonomy of the several States. The adoption of this instrument was the crowning act of American patriotism, the pivotal point in political history, the triumph of self-government, the culmination of the contest which gave to the world political and religious liberty, and enthroned intelligence and the popular will as the governing forces in the empires of the earth. This great achievement, not inferior in results to that of the English barons in extorting the great charter from King John, was not accomplished without opposition. At that early day the dogma of State sovereignty was broached and advocated by men whose favor gave it strength, and whose patriotism was above reproach.

Honestly believing in the sovereignty of the States severally, these men consistently opposed the adoption of the Constitution, which required the concession of some of the elements of sovereignty to the General Government, thereby constituting it a veritable nationality, instead of an assemblage of confederated sovereignties. Their views differed widely from those of modern advocates of that dogma ; for they were unable to find State sovereignty in the Constitution, and opposed its adoption on that account, while it is now contended—or was till the war settled it—that this principle forms the “warp and woof” of the instrument itself. The contention was not about States’ rights, but State sovereignty.

Those who favored the Constitution and secured its adoption, believing in a strong Federal Government, were designated Federalists ; while those who opposed it in the interest of larger powers for the States, were called Republicans. These were the parties under the Constitution. The Federalists elected the first President, George Washington, and set the new government in operation. They interpreted the grants of power made in the Constitution quite liberally, assuming that the purpose of that instrument was to constitute the United States an independent sovereignty, superior to the sovereignty inhering in the several States ; and assuming also that these grants were sufficient for that purpose without trenching upon the reserved rights of the States. Thus this question of the division of rights between the General and the State governments presented one of the first issues before the people of the United States, gave rise to the first political parties under the Constitution, and in some way or other questions relating to this old controversy have had to do with all the parties which have had more than a tentative existence from the beginning till the present time.

The Federalist party, after incorporating its essential principles in the government, and electing Washington twice and John Adams once, would seem to have had prestige and power enough to maintain itself and conquer opposition ; but the opposition grew in intensity and virulence, and the party in power fell under odium through the unwise action of some of its adherents who, in its name, sought for enlargements of power not in the Constitution and never contemplated by the real founders of the government. The Hartford Convention became the

synonyme of political infamy, and an incubus which the Federal party could neither carry nor dislodge from its shoulders. In the mean time the opposition, then known as the Democratic-Republican party, had acquiesced in the adoption of the Constitution, accepted its provisions, increased in public favor, and gathered strength to gain control of the government by the election of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency. By this time the original issues between the parties had passed away, and new questions had arisen, so that "Federalist" and "Republican" had come to mean something widely different from the ideas which attached to them in the earlier history of the parties.

Multitudes believe that Mr. Jefferson was elected President by the Democratic party. He is sometimes spoken of as the first Democratic President, and as the founder and patron of that political organization. Of course this is a delusion. Mr. Jefferson was "out of politics" before the modern Democratic party was born. The party which elected Mr. Jefferson was called both Republican and Democratic, but the assumption that the present Democratic party ever had any relation to that old party of the time of Jefferson is utterly groundless. The party of Jefferson and Madison, the first competitor of the party which elected Washington and Adams, became the party of the government upon the accession of Mr. Jefferson, and, in the broadest sense, the National party, the events preceding and causing the war of 1812 contributing largely to the expansion of its principles, as well as to its triumph, in the complete overthrow of the Federalist party.

Mr. Jefferson came into power as the representative of strict constructionism, fearing centralization, and advocating the reserved rights of the people and of the States. After his inauguration, with the responsibilities of office upon him, in the controversies which arose under his administration with Great Britain, resulting in war under his successor, Mr. Jefferson asserted the full powers of the General Government in a way that would have been creditable to his Federalist predecessors, and he never found occasion to reassert the looser theories of his earlier life. Mr. Madison inherited his controversies, followed in his footsteps, maintained his principles, asserted the full powers of the General Government, and demonstrated the national sovereignty, without any invasion of the reserved rights of the people or of the States. The people who supported Jefferson and Madison

approved the enlargement of their ideas, carried the war to a successful issue, and elected Mr. Monroe to the Presidency, leaving the remnant of the Federalist party scattered and powerless. Under Mr. Monroe's first administration the old issues became obsolete, and party organizations ceased to exist. He was re-elected substantially without opposition. In the fullest sense he was the President of the people. When his second term expired there were no organized parties to put candidates in the field, after the modern methods. The old Federalist party was dead; the old Republican party had outgrown itself as a party, had expanded its creed, possessed the government and lost identity as a party in successful administration. No existing political party can possibly antedate this epoch in our national history—an epoch distinguished in our political annals as the era of peace and goodwill.

It is neither for nor against the Democratic party of to-day that it is not as old as its less intelligent advocates imagine it to be. In the nature of the case political parties must change. Old issues die, sometimes with marvellous suddenness, and new issues spring into life with surprising swiftness. Policies come and go with the surging tides of time. Methods yield to the forceful currents of popular thought, which sweep away favorite theories as well as factious oppositions; but principles abide. He is the true Democrat, whether in the party bearing that name or not, who believes in the rule of the majority, and in that interpretation of the Constitution which makes the union permanent, the nation a sovereignty, and gives to the General Government all the powers nominated in the bond, and to all the States their reserved rights of self-control and local government.

Such was the creed of the Democratic party when it first became a party. That creed, like all creeds, was a growth. It never sprang matured from any man's brain. Its germinal ideas accorded with the principles which guided Mr. Jefferson's administration after his practical statesmanship had lifted him above the vagaries of his earlier years, and made his conduct of the government wise and vigorous. The real seed-thoughts of the party, however, were found in the administration of Andrew Jackson, or rather in the discussions excited by his acts while in office. The doctrines promulgated by his followers, which were

afterwards formulated into a creed for the party, were not made prominent in connection with pending questions, so as to be effective in his first election. He came into power with little reference to his beliefs touching the underlying principles of our governmental system, but with a wide acknowledgment of his patriotic spirit and high personal qualities.

When Mr. Monroe's successor was to be chosen, there were no political organizations to nominate candidates. In this condition of affairs what might have been anticipated came to pass. Several statesmen of high character were brought forward by their personal friends as worthy to receive the electoral votes of the States. Adams, Jackson, Clay, Crawford, and White became candidates, although the last two were scarcely recognized as such outside of their own States. The first three were the real competitors. They were all friends of the administration; their following was not partisan, but personal. The electoral votes were so divided that no choice was made, and the election was carried into the House of Representatives. Jackson had the largest number of votes, but not enough to elect him. The friends of Adams and Clay united their forces, and gave the election to Adams, and Adams made Clay his secretary of State. This transaction had the appearance of barter, and gave great offence to the followers of Jackson, who raised the cry of bargain and sale, and lost no time in determining to oppose the administration thus inaugurated. They rallied to the support of their chief, determined to elect him at the end of four years, a purpose they pursued with tireless energy till it was accomplished. This organized opposition to John Quincy Adams, in the interest of Andrew Jackson, was known as the Jackson party. The supporters of Adams were known as the administration party. Thus the lines were drawn between political parties with little regard to political faiths, and with less regard to the parties which previously existed, but which as parties existed no more. This was an epoch in the political history of the country, as it was the birthtime of two of the greatest parties that ever contended for the mastery in the presence of the American people.

It was inevitable that political parties so distinctly marked and openly struggling for success, should have distinguishing names. These were soon found. The Jackson party took the name Democrat, and became the Democratic party. As an organi-

zation it remains till this day. The other party took to itself the honored name of the party of the revolutionary patriots, and became the Whig party. Adams was its candidate for re-election, but failed; Jackson was elected. He was the first Democratic president, using the term in its modern sense. Jackson brought great prestige to the office, and entered upon its duties with much popular enthusiasm. The shouts of the people were for Jackson, with little thought of his political platform. He soon found himself confronted with questions demanding for their solution the expression of positive opinions. In the emergency he was not found wanting. The nullification acts of South Carolina called him out on the subject of State sovereignty. Democrat that he was, he did not accept the doctrine of Mr. Calhoun. His declaration that the "Union must and shall be preserved," enforced by expletives more vigorous than pious, has become famous in political parlance. He believed in the centralization of power in the General Government, under the Constitution, sufficient to maintain the Union, even if it required the coercion of a State. But in the matter of a national bank, and on other questions of policy in relation to tariffs, public moneys, and public improvements, he proved to be a strict constructionist—or, at least, his actions compelled his friends to assume the ground of strict constructionism in order to his defence. This necessitated defence of General Jackson's arbitrary action with regard to the national bank and the public funds is the real source of the Democratic creed, so far as it has ever had a formulated creed of distinctive principles, based on definite interpretations of the Constitution.

It was simply impossible that the followers of Adams and Clay should be strict constructionists. With Jackson, these champions of American nationalism, believed that the constitutional grants of power to the General Government were sufficient to maintain the union in its superior sovereignty over the States; and they believed, also, that its lawful powers extended to the regulation of the currency, to the fostering of internal improvements, to aiding in the development of the resources of the country, and to the protection of the industrial pursuits of the people when brought into competition with foreign trade. As a result, the Whig party favored a national bank, a protective tariff, and national aid in improving rivers and harbors, and in constructing roads and canals. The one party would reduce the

General Government to the exercise of police regulations, and the procurement of revenue for the maintenance of its officers and necessary expenses; while the other party gave it a higher function in promoting education, in encouraging industries, arts, sciences, and in co-operating with the States in the general uplift of the people. These points indicate the issues between the parties of simultaneous birth, which sprang from the competitions of Jackson, Adams, and Clay; and upon these issues the mighty political battles of half a century were fought, engaging the energies of men whose superiors were not in the days before them, and have not been found amongst their successors. There is scarcely room for doubt that the ever-present dread of the effect on slavery of the increase of the power of the General Government prevented the slaveholders from fully trusting the Whig party, and kept them from committing to it the practical interpretation of the Constitution. They feared that the liberal construction of that instrument might open the way for action that would jeopard the institution in places under national control. It was pre-eminently a State institution, the creature of State law, and naturally took refuge under the higher conception of the rights of the States as understood by strict constructionists. In this the Southerners were logical as well as prudent; for the position of the Whig party implied the right of the General Government to hedge the institution about with limitations inimical to its prosperity. They knew that by regulating the traffic in slaves between the States, and by restricting it to the States that fostered it, its profitableness as a trade could be diminished, and they foresaw that the moral instincts of the people would in time demand the exercise of all the power in this direction the Constitution afforded; and therefore they never fully trusted the Whig party, notwithstanding the fact that the leaders of the party disavowed any desire to interfere with the institution in the States, and made their platform as strongly pro-slavery as was that of the Democrats. There was a deep conviction in the minds of slaveholders that the foundation principles of the Whig party were antagonistic to the pretensions of slavery; and they were unable to free themselves from the suspicion that, with that party firmly established in power, the rising spirit of freedom in the land would close up the outlets of the traffic which were deemed necessary to its profitableness and life. It was

manifest to all that with the vast domain of freedom rapidly increasing in population, wealth, and influence, it would be impossible for slavery long to maintain itself if shut up within its old limits. It was therefore neither by accident nor blind chance that the slaveholders adopted and took possession of the Democratic party, moulded it to their liking, and subjected it to their will. They saw in it their only hope of controlling the nation in their interest, and depended upon that party to hold back the strong hand of the General Government while they pushed into the territories with their human chattels and forced upon the whole people the recognition of their cherished assumption that "slavery was national and freedom sectional." No doubt now exists that their ambition contemplated that consummation, and we shudder to think how near they came to realizing their ultimate purpose.

The fate of the Whig party, coming as it did through complications with the slavery question, affords lessons of profound significance. As a party it comprised a large share of the intelligence and talent of the country. Its principles commanded the approval of the most gifted of the nation. Its methods were open and honorable; and, so far forth as it affected the legislation of the country, its influence was beneficial. A more patriotic party never sought the favor of the American people; yet its success was limited, as it never enjoyed the privilege of an unbroken administration of the government. It elected two Presidents, and both died in office. Its first President, General Harrison, died in a month after his inauguration, before his policy could be developed, and the Vice-President, on whom the duties of the Presidency devolved, proved untrue to the party which elected him, and defeated the measures on which the hearts of the people were set.

This bitter disappointment was followed by new developments in the interests of slavery, which produced a reaction in the country and defeated Henry Clay and the Whig party, in 1844, giving the election to "Polk and Annexation." Texas wished to be annexed to the United States, and the slaveholders desired it, and the Democrats adopted "annexation" as their battle-cry, and succeeded. The Whigs opposed it, and predicted that the annexation of Texas in the interest of slavery-extension would result in war with Mexico, and produce a more violent

agitation of the slavery question than had ever been known—one that would imperil the Union, shake the foundations of the government, and disturb all the business and social relations of the country. These dire predictions were all verified ; yet through the disasters came the deliverance. The enlargement of the area of slavery brought the country into war with Mexico, as had been foreseen ; and this in turn brought us Arizona, New Mexico, and California, to be added ultimately to the area of freedom. Then followed the election of General Taylor, with the hopeful outlook for a Whig administration. In the midst of the confidence inspired by the steadiness of the veteran warrior in the conduct of civil affairs, guided by the principles of his party, came the calamity of his death. Mr. Fillmore took the helm, and piloted the ship of state through stormy seas without betraying his party ; but the breakers of slavery aggressiveness and anti-slavery protests rendered a smooth voyage an impossibility. Slaveholders became rampant, demanding the right to carry their slaves through the States in their journeys, to settle them in the territories and to have fugitives returned to their masters at government expense. The agitation became alarming. Statesmen trembled before the storm, and became more than partisans. Clay and Webster, believing the union in danger, thought duty required that questions of party be waived in order to avert the calamity of disruption and civil war ; and these great lights stood forth the champions of “compromise.” The restriction of slavery to the south side of a given line, and the fugitive-slave law, ensued. The odium of the “compromise” fell with crushing weight on the administration. The anti-slavery sentiment in the free States turned against it, while the South adhered more closely than ever to the party most devoted to its interests. Thus the Whig party, after dallying with slavery to the verge of dishonor, and bidding for its support in a platform out of harmony with its fundamental principles, went down before the power it courted—went down in the sense that it could not again carry the election, nor longer hold the confidence of its most conscientious friends.

The capture of the Democratic party by the slaveholding power was its last and greatest victory. It was an achievement which promised great things in the way of nationalizing slavery, but it proved a brilliant example of “vaulting ambition” o’er-

leaping itself. The aggressive spirit which the institution exhibited after assuring itself of the support of the party which came into power in the election of Franklin Pierce in 1852, provoked resistance more spirited and persistent than had been anticipated. The removal of the Whig party, as a party, from the political arena did not assure the quiet possession of the government by the worshippers at the shrine of slavery, but opened the way and created the occasion for the concentration of the anti-slavery forces of the country in a party destined to fill a mission more glorious than had ever been assigned to a party of the people under the sun. This result, however, was not reached till the Democratic party had full opportunity to display its subserviency to the oligarchy which governed it. It held its ground till its commission was renewed in the election of 1856, placing James Buchanan in the Presidency and intensifying the spirit which prompted the "rule or ruin" determination of the South.

Now, as never before, questions relating to slavery overshadowed everything else, while those relating to banks, tariffs, internal improvements, and all others were dwarfed or disregarded. The whole fabric of Democratic policy stood on pro-slavery ground. Then, with that party in power, confirmed by the election of 1856, with the fugitive-slave law in force, and the whole government committed to the demands of slavery, so that its votaries controlled Congress, dictated duty to the President, and touched springs which reached the Supreme Court of the United States, making the Dred Scott decision a possibility, it looked as if the nation were chained to the chariot-wheels of this arrogant monster for years to come. Inspired by its successes, and conscious of its ability to sway the government, it rushed confidently into strife for the possession of the virgin soil of territories dedicated to freedom; and on this rock it split.

The downfall of the Whig party dates from its defeat in 1852. The influence of the "Third Party" was something, but not a powerful factor in its overthrow. The assumption that it was a chief agency is not supported by the facts. In 1840 and in 1844, the abolition party cast an inconsiderable vote, which did not amount to a disturbing element in the elections of those years. In 1848, the "Free-Soil" party was in the field with a broader platform and with greater elements of strength. The nomination of General Taylor by the Whigs alienated the Quakers and

some other anti-slavery people from the Whig party ; while the nomination of Lewis Cass by the Democrats offended many in that party, particularly in the State of New York, and prepared the way for the large Free-Soil vote cast that year—the largest ever cast. Martin Van Buren bolted the nomination of Cass, and he and his special adherents expressed sympathy with Free-Soilism, probably as much to defeat his old competitor, General Cass, as to advance the cause of freedom. He was nominated by the Free-Soil party and accepted. His candidacy drew from the Democrats about as many votes as were drawn from the Whigs, and aided not in the destruction of the Whig party, but in the election of General Taylor. The Free-Soil vote of 1852 was much less than in 1848. Then came the Know-Nothing furor, which swept the country like a tornado, disrupting party lines as nothing had ever done before. It was not a third party, but a movement of extraordinary character, forming an anomalous chapter in the history of American politics. The Whig party was already out of the field, and never again confronted its old competitor.

The Democratic party, though badly shattered, being in power, managed to survive as a party. Out of the debris came the Republican party, organized and drilled, ready for the fray, in 1856. Into it came the anti-slavery elements of all the old parties, including all the voters of the Free-Soil party, who were in it from principle. Pro-slavery Whigs went over to the Democrats. Thus, after the culmination of the slave power, and after the sifting in the Know-Nothing storm, the lines of the parties were finally drawn upon the issues thrust upon the country by the aggressions of slavery. The practical question demanding settlement was the extension of slavery into the territories. The Republican party squarely accepted this issue ; but, anti-slavery as it was, it proposed no interference with the institution in the States where it existed. As a party of principle it entered the lists courageously, and made rapid strides toward victory in the first national campaign ; but the Democratic party had rallied after the Know-Nothing shaking up, and with the South nearly solid in its support, and with the accession to its ranks of the pro-slavery Whigs, losing only the meagre anti-slavery element which was left to it after the defection of 1848, it was nearly as strong and quite as defiant in 1856 as in 1852, while its devotion to slavery was as complete as ever before.

In some sense the Republican party became the successor of the Whig party. It inherited much of its distinguishing faith from that source, and took its place as the antagonist of the Democracy. In the emergency precipitated by the rebellion, the Republican administration found it necessary to apply the essential principles for which the Whigs had always contended, for the maintenance of the Union, so that the exact features of that old party's construction of the constitutional powers of the government were brought into requisition, and these proved to be the sheet-anchor of hope to patriotic hearts in the darkest night of discouragement, the inspiration to our leaders in the great struggle, and therefore the strength and victory of Republicanism in its sorest trials. On the other hand, nearly all the old-time issues held by the Democratic party, in opposition to the Whigs, perished in the rebellion, or became obsolete through the progress of public opinion. In the one case the body died, but the soul survived in a new form of vigorous life; while, in the other case, the body retained vitality enough to keep it from dissolution, yet was animated by a spirit that may or may not claim kinship with the ghost that went out into darkness when slavery met its fate. As is common with old men, this party lives largely in the past. Its eyes are turned backward. Even in its newly found vigor its creed is mostly negative. It denies much and affirms little. It accepts the amendments to the Constitution because it must. It accepts the national currency, formerly so offensive to it, because it cannot do otherwise. Its hard money record is retired into the shades of forgetfulness. Its wildcat money record is an unsavory memory. Its financial policy is undeveloped. Its tariff ambiguities abide. It lives upon what it has been, but the retrospect does not cheer. It is a great power. It has the strength of numbers and the prestige of age and success. Its power of adaptation to the passions and prejudices of races and religions is marvellous.

The history of the Republican party is not yet written. As a party it was born in troublous times. It sprang into manhood as the embodiment of loyalty to the Union, intelligent in the recognition of constitutional guarantees, and yet resolute in the purpose that human slavery—the gangrene of the body-politic—although entrenched in constitutions of so many States, should not blight the fair domain of the nation's territories, whose broad acres stood in untarnished purity, inviting the coming

millions to erect homes consecrated to virtue, liberty, and progress. It came with the primal affirmation inscribed on its banners, that freedom is national, and slavery sectional. It had a mission which was broader and grander than its founders knew, and it came to its mission with men more richly endowed for leadership in the emergencies to be met than the most sanguine dreamed. It will not be possible for future generations to read the story of the slaveholders' rebellion and its outcome without the impression that Mr. Lincoln was a Providential character, a man come to the kingdom for such a time. Others in their different spheres were as marked as the great leader himself, and as important in their places. The country will never blush for the men or measures which gave character to the Republican party in the early years of its victorious progress. Wisely and bravely did they grapple with difficulties more formidable than ever before confronted American statesmanship, and heroically did they conduct the nation through perils more dreadful than the people ever knew to exist. The lustre of their names will shine with increasing brightness as the years roll on, and unborn millions will crown their memory with grateful applause.

Looking backward from the present, the discovery that the Republican party has made mistakes is no evidence of superior discernment. It did not develop its own scheme of reconstruction. The death of Mr. Lincoln was followed by embarrassments through the defection of Andrew Johnson that crippled its operations and forced contentment with half-way measures. With his unquestioned loyalty to the Union, Mr. Johnson was 'at heart a Democrat, and in the crisis of reconstruction his Democratic instincts asserted themselves, throwing into confusion the counsels of those who had given him power. In debate he was the peer of the strongest men of his times, and having the courage of his convictions his exercise of the veto power was prompt and vigorous. With less of kindness toward the South than Mr. Lincoln possessed, his sense of obligation to the whole country and to the future was dull in comparison with that which characterized his predecessor, the illustrious martyr. In these circumstances it was impossible for the party to carry into effect any measure that encountered his prejudices. Compromise in reconstruction was therefore inevitable. If the idea of dead States had been consistently enforced, and if the whole area of

the seceded States had been laid out with new boundaries and in better shape, and if to each new State there had been given a new name suggestive of loyalty, the names and pride of the seceded States perishing in the rebellion, secession would have met deserved fate and become odious more rapidly than was possible under existing conditions.

Nevertheless the Republican party has been a success, and as such it will pass into history whether it shall ever elect another President or not. Its fundamental principles inherited from the Whig party, and those developed in the fires of its conflicts, have been wrought into the fabric of the government, so that no party will attempt their elimination. The stamp of its power is in the Constitution, in the established rights of suffrage, in the national currency, and in everything essential to the maintenance of the national honor at home and abroad.

The Republican party has been less wise in the management of its party concerns than in the conduct of the government. Its party discipline has been less rigid than that of other great parties. Through defeat it may learn wisdom, however, and discover what vast results follow slight derelictions. Want of harmony has characterized its counsels, and personal ambitions have brought it distraction. The real weakness of this party has been its failure to sustain its own administrations. Early in General Grant's first term factious opposition appeared. Before it was ended, a "liberal republican" party was organized and nominated Horace Greeley for the purpose of assuring the President's defeat. The Democrats indorsed the nomination, and defeated the purpose of the malcontents. After his second election, the Republican press vied with the opposition press in detraction of General Grant. His judgment was assailed, his intelligence belittled, his counsels derided, his motives aspersed, and all was done that malignity could do to destroy his influence. The calumniations of the Democratic press were rehearsed by Republican papers with a relish that showed the deepest animosity towards the "old commander," and these papers, instead of loyally defending the administration, or kindly criticising their chief if criticism were deserved, denounced his actions and opinions as "Cæsarism" and "Grantism," and not republicanism. When he discouraged the cry of a "solid South" in the campaign, and insisted that five Southern States were Republican, and ought to be held steadily

in the Republican ranks, his advice was repudiated, and the cry of a "solid South" rang out from all the Republican rostrums in the land. After the election it was found exceedingly important to break that solidity, which was righteously done, but under conditions not desirable for repetition. No wonder the party was reduced to the verge of defeat !

In a short time after the inauguration of President Hayes, dissensions arose in the Republican party over his earliest efforts to adjust complications in the Southern States. Had he not beforehand proclaimed his purpose not to stand for a second term, the bitterness of the dissension would have been much more intense than it became. During his entire term he was belittled and discounted by a large portion of the Republican press, and found shallow support from any quarter, when it ought to have been cordial and persistent. Nevertheless, he made an administration honorable to himself, creditable to his party, and useful to the country. Under his prudent and upright conduct of the government, the lines of the party were strengthened, in spite of dissensions, so that the election of another Republican was a possibility : but who of all the leaders of the party ever acknowledged indebtedness to President Hayes for his share in bringing about the victory ? All adored the rising rather than the setting sun. Mr. Garfield came into office with the goodwill of all the factions, so that it looked for a time as if the party would at length honor itself by honoring its chief. This appearance was deceptive. The spoils of office were not distributed till faction broke out with such violence that the Democracy could not surpass the bitterness with which Mr. Garfield was assailed by many who had aided in his election. Nor did his tragic death heal the breach. While lying prostrate from the murderer's bullet, the tongue of Republican detraction was turned away from him only to create distrust of the one who must take his place. Mr. Arthur encountered Republican coldness when he most needed sympathy, and was greeted with cruel suspicion when he most needed the help which could only come from the united support of his party. Nevertheless he gave an administration which challenged the admiration of all candid men and well nigh disarmed criticism. Having earned the nomination to be his own successor, other leadership was sought, and Mr. Arthur was complimented with approving words, while the substan-

tial token of the party's favor was passed over to another—to one worthy the honor, indeed, but unable to take the prize. Defeat came to the party at last, which, with all the noble principles embodied in its creed, and with the grand record of its past achievements, was never wise enough to stand firm and united in the generous support of its own administration.

Did it overcome this weakness in the humiliation of defeat? The record will not justify this assumption. After the nomination of Mr. Harrison, the party rallied to his support with commendable unanimity, and gained success. He was scarcely in his seat when the old practice of belittling the incumbent of the office, in the interest of a possible candidate in the future, was resumed. Mr. Blaine was in the cabinet, and Mr. Blaine was the morning star of Republican hope. Whatever was good in the administration was credited to Mr. Blaine. Mr. Blaine never needed the fulsome praise bestowed upon him, and was never benefited by it; and Mr. Harrison never deserved the "faint praise" with which he was so often condemned. While his administration will stand high in honor in the history that is yet to be written, and while the passing years will add to the fame of his admirable personal qualities, it is, nevertheless, an indisputable fact that the Republican party weakened itself during the period of his incumbency by failing to render merited support to its own administration.

There have been other parties which have figured more or less in the political field. The Anti-Masonic party had an ephemeral existence, but never reached the dignity of a national party, and exerted only an incidental influence in public affairs. The same is true of the Abolition and Free-Soil parties, previously named. There was an American party, the product of know-nothingism, which lingered for a while after the storm, and contributed to the confusion that reigned in political circles during the interval between the going down of the Whig party and the development of the Republican party. There was a "Union" party in the field prior to the war, known as the Bell-Everett party, from the names of its candidates; but it was only a temporary expedient, a sort of post-mortem wriggle of defunct Whiggism, where the Republican movement was unable to obtain recognition. The Prohibition party came into the field at a later date, and exhibited greater persistency than some of the other "third parties," hav-

ing under it a noble sentiment, and in it men of moral worth and philanthropic aim ; but even this party never had the ghost of a prospect of reaching the goal of its ambition, and never made any direct contribution towards the destruction of political evils. Most of these " third parties " resulted from some sporadic outburst of moral sentiment, and all failed through lack of rooting in distinct constitutional principle. Some of them have served an admirable purpose in furnishing occupation for disgruntled politicians ; some, as counter-irritants, drawing inflammation from the vitals of the other parties, and others in affording a stage on which amateur politicians might play at election campaigning. The last experiment in this line, the so-called People's party, has puzzled and bewildered many astute manipulators of public sentiment, yet without inspiring any high degree of hopefulness with regard to beneficial results.

The practical lesson deducible from this summary of political history is that there is no foundation for a political party to stand upon that is either broad enough or strong enough to give the slightest hope of achieving success in controlling the affairs of the nation, except some principle of construing the constitution of the United States, which is sufficiently far-reaching to touch every department of the government, and to determine the character and genius of our institutions. No temporary issue, in legislation, however urgent ; no isolated moral sentiment, however valuable in itself ; nor any sectional or race prejudice, however powerful or inveterate,—will serve to justify or sustain a separate political organization, in the presence of the American people, long enough to assure success.

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